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COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS ACTING AS
PREPARATORY BODY FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO THE
FIGHT AGAINST THE ILLICIT PRODUCTION,
SALE, DEMAND, TRAFFIC AND DISTRIBUTION
OF NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC
SUBSTANCES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES
Second session
Vienna, 16-20 March 1998
Agenda item 2 (b) *

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO CONSIDER THE FIGHT AGAINST THE ILLICIT PRODUCTION, SALE, DEMAND, TRAFFIC AND DISTRIBUTION OF NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES AND TO PROPOSE NEW STRATEGIES, METHODS, PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES AND SPECIFIC MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTS OF THE INFORMAL INTER-SESSIONAL MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION ACTING AS PREPARATORY BODY FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL

Action plan against illicit manufacture, trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors

*The agenda for the session is contained in document E/CN.7/1998/PC/1.

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I. RAISING AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM OF AMPHETAMINE-TYPE STIMULANTS

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Problem

3 1. The problem of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), though relatively new in many countries, is growing quickly and is unlikely to go away on its own. It is rapidly changing in scope and geographical spread. Yet global awareness of it is limited and responses to it are heterogeneous and inconsistent.

Action

4 2. The international community should give higher priority to combating the problem of ATS in all its aspects. The competent entities of the United Nations system should give appropriate consideration to that problem. The subject of ATS should be given higher priority and become a regular item on the agenda of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

6 3. International and regional bodies should continue advocating implementation of the extensive framework of international treaties, as well as resolutions or decisions addressing various aspects of the ATS problem adopted by the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board.

4. International bodies such as the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization (WHO) should strengthen their work on technical scientific dimensions of the ATS problem and disseminate the results in regular publications for States and the general public.

5. States should give the issue the priority and attention it deserves and implement the global framework noted in paragraph 3 above.

6. In addition to efforts by States, mobilization of the private sector and non-governmental organizations should be sought in achieving awareness of the ATS problem.

7. States should disseminate information on actions taken in fulfilment of the present Action Plan and report them to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which, in turn, should review and appraise implementation of the Action Plan at the national, regional and international levels.

II. REDUCING DEMAND FOR ILLICIT AMPHETAMINE-TYPE STIMULANTS

Problem

8. In many countries, ATS abuse is increasingly concentrated among younger segments of the population, among whom the substances are widely and erroneously believed to be safe and benign. Such abuse of ATS is threatening to become a part of mainstream consumer culture.

Action

9. International bodies such as UNDCP and WHO should, on a regular basis: (a) collate current information on the health effects of ATS and their by-products; (b) study the social, economic and cultural driving forces of demand for ATS; (c) identify, document and disseminate good practices in the prevention and treatment of ATS abuse, as well as the prescription of licit ATS; and (d) coordinate work with non-governmental organizations in these areas.

10. States should: (a) continuously monitor changing ATS abuse patterns; (b) investigate social, economic, health and cultural dimensions of ATS abuse; (c) give priority to research, where capacity is available, on the long-term health effects of ATS abuse; (d) use and disseminate the results of these activities, including the information collated by the international bodies, for targeted prevention and treatment efforts as well as, where appropriate, public awareness campaigns; and (e) include, in their education campaigns, information on the harmful effects of ATS abuse.

III. PROVIDING ACCURATE INFORMATION ON AMPHETAMINE-TYPE STIMULANTS

Problem

11. Traditionally limited to the ambit of underground literature, information on illicit ATS has now become accessible to a large population through modern technology. Recipes for clandestine ATS manufacture, techniques of ATS abuse, images of ATS as harmless drugs and methods of evading existing controls are all widely available. This malign influence should be countered by a positive use of information technology such as the Internet for educational and training purposes.

Action

12. Consultations should be initiated at the national, regional and international levels, as appropriate, with representatives of the traditional media, and the telecommunication and software industries to promote and encourage self-restraint and to develop frameworks, based on existing law, for the removal of illegal drug-related information. Frameworks could be developed from industry-managed open complaint mechanisms such as reporting hotlines, which allow Internet users to report instances of illegal drug-related material found on the Internet. Responsibility for enforcement action should remain with the appropriate enforcement authorities. States should also encourage the development and use of rating and filtering software, which enables users to protect themselves from material that, while not illegal, may contain offensive or undesirable information.

13. States should ensure that their legal frameworks regarding illegal drugs and drug-related information apply as appropriate to the Internet as they do off-line.

14. International bodies such as UNDCP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), WHO, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and the Customs Co-operation Council (also called the World Customs Organization), as well as appropriate regional and national organizations, should participate in a worldwide clearing-house system (i.e. the electronic linking, through the Internet, of national, regional and international documentation centres on substance abuse) to disseminate accurate and timely information on various aspects of the ATS problem, as well as use the Internet for distance learning purposes, with particular emphasis on assistance to developing countries.

15. States should: (a) use modern information technology to disseminate information on adverse health, social and economic consequences of ATS abuse; and (b) encourage methodological development, standardized terminology and coordinated data collection on ATS through, *inter alia,* participation in the international clearing-house system.

16. States should also take appropriate action to fully implement the provisions of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, article 10 (on prohibiting the advertisement of controlled substances to the general public),[1] and of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, article 3 (on publicly inciting illicit activities related to drugs).[2]

IV. LIMITING THE SUPPLY OF AMPHETAMINE-TYPE STIMULANTS

Problem

17. For ATS, the principal supply control strategies are to target trafficking, stop illicit manufacture and prevent diversion of laboratory equipment and the chemical starting materials (i.e. the precursors). The latter is particularly important because it is the precursors rather than the ATS end-products which are trafficked interregionally. The precursors, however, have a wide range of licit industrial uses and form a part of licit international trade. Effective monitoring can only be successful with the close cooperation of industry . Such cooperation also plays a crucial role in preventing diversions of ATS from licit sources. Information furnished by Governments to the International Narcotics Control Board shows diversion of ATS from legal international trade into illicit channels and high legal consumption of ATS in some countries.

Action

18. On the basis of the existing framework for precursor control provided by article 12 of the 1988 Convention, related Economic and Social Council resolutions and recommendations of the International Narcotics Control Board, the competent authorities at the international, regional and national levels should take the following actions specific to precursors for ATS: (a) The promotion of close cooperation with industry to establish measures and/or a code of conduct governing trade in ATS precursors; (b) enhanced implementation of the control measures against the diversion of ATS precursors listed under the 1988 Convention, including greater use of pre-export notifications and improved procedures for information exchange at the national and international levels; (c) improved monitoring of non-scheduled substances that have been identified as frequently used in illicit ATS manufacture, including voluntary cooperation between authorities and the relevant branches of industry in order to help identify suspicious transactions; (d) the establishment of an international special surveillance list of substances referred to in subparagraph (b) above as part of a general early warning system; (e) consideration of punishing, as a criminal offence in the sense of article 3 of the 1988 Convention, the diversion of non-scheduled chemical substances with the knowledge that they are intended for use in the illicit manufacture of ATS; and (f) exchanges of information between all the agencies concerned, including in investigations concerning such non-scheduled substances to detect and prevent illicit trafficking.

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[1]United Nations, *Treaty Series,* vol. 1019, No. 14956.

[2]*Official Records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November-20 December 1988,* vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).

19. In order to target the clandestine manufacture of ATS, international, regional and national authorities should also: (a) monitor clandestine manufacturing methods; (b) develop drug signature analysis and profiling; (c) monitor, to the extent possible, sales of laboratory equipment, in compliance with article 13 of the 1988 Convention; (d) train all enforcement and control personnel involved in the technical complexities of ATS; and (e) investigate the possibility of developing procedures for differentiating between groups of substances with closely related chemical structures and for the detection of individual substances within ATS, for use by enforcement authorities.

20. States should strengthen their enforcement efforts against the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in ATS.

21. On the basis of the 1971 Convention and related Economic and Social Council resolutions, competent authorities, in cooperation with industry, should closely monitor developments in the licit manufacture of, trade in and distribution of ATS in order to detect and prevent: (a) diversion into illicit channels from manufacture and international and retail trade (pharmacies); and (b) irresponsible marketing and prescribing of such substances. They should also cooperate closely with the International Narcotics Control Board by exchanging all relevant information in accordance with the 1971 Convention and related Council resolutions.

V. STRENGTHENING THE CONTROL SYSTEM FOR AMPHETAMINE-TYPE STIMULANTS AND THEIR PRECURSORS

Problem

22. When applied to clandestinely manufactured ATS, the international drug control system reveals several shortcomings, *inter alia*: the complicated procedure for scheduling psychotropic substances; the relative novelty of the precursor control regime; and the different procedures for changing the scope of control in the international drug control conventions. Effectively counteracting or preventing emergency situations, which may differ from region to region, requires a control system that is fast, flexible, easy to adapt to new situations and both technically and conceptually commensurate with the ever-greater complexity of the evolving ATS problem.

Action

23. Concerning the wide area of regulatory control, international and regional organizations as well as States should, as appropriate:

(a) Rapidly identify and assess new ATS found on illicit markets; States may then wish to use such assessments to determine whether they should bring such substances under control so that legal action can be taken against illicit manufacture and trafficking;

(b) Improve the technical basis of control, particularly with regard to increasing the flexibility of the process of scheduling. This would involve application of one of the following models used in different countries: (i) emergency or simplified scheduling processes; (ii) scheduling based on structurally similar groups (analogues), and (iii) control for purposes of criminal prosecution, based on similarities in chemical structure and known or anticipated pharmacological effects;

(c) Implement the relevant Council resolutions and consider the recommendations of the Board aimed at strengthening the control of psychotropic substances under the 1971 Convention, which should be similar to those applied to narcotic drugs;

(d) Introduce appropriate sanctions and penalties for illicit manufacture of and trafficking in ATS in compliance with article 22 of the 1971 Convention and article 3 of the 1988 Convention, strengthen law enforcement efforts against ATS offences, and consider appropriate penalties and alternative measures against the abuse of ATS, consistent with national laws and policies;

(e) Improve data collection and exchange of information on issues such as size of clandestine laboratories detected, manufacturing methods, precursors used, purities, prices, sources of ATS and their precursors, and epidemiological information;

(f) Strengthen regional cooperation, *inter alia*, through the following: multilateral exchanges between States of information about the adoption of amendments of national laws relating to the control of ATS; regional arrangements for monitoring new developments in the clandestine manufacture of and trafficking in ATS; and establishment of rapid channels of communication;

(g) Provide, at the request of States with limited expertise in dealing with the complex technical problems posed by ATS, the information and assistance needed to implement effective measures against the manufacture of, trafficking in and abuse of ATS;

(h) Improve the exchange of information between States on transactions involving ATS in order to strengthen the control system for such substances and their precursors and to apply the 'know-your-client' principle.